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Intelligence Information Cable

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PAGE 1 OF 4 PAGES

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CITE

DIST 28 OCTOBER 1972

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM

DOI 25 OCTOBER 1972

SUBJECT COMMENTS OF CHUONG THIEN PROVINCE CHIEF ON ENEMY
CEASEFIRE PREPARATIONS AND GOVERNMENT PLANS TO
COUNTER THEM

ACQ

VIETNAM, CAN THO (26 OCTOBER 1972)

1. ON 25 OCTOBER 1972 COLONEL VONG KIM S I N H, CHUONG
THIEN PROVINCE CHIEF, SAID THAT SINCE SEPTEMBER ELEMENTS OF
THE 18B, 95A, D-1 AND D-2 ENEMY MAIN FORCE REGIMENTS IN THE
PROVINCE HAVE BEEN BROKEN DOWN INTO SMALL UNITS AND ATTACHED
TO VIET CONG (VC) LOCAL FORCES AND GUERRILLA UNITS. THESE
AUGMENTED LOCAL FORCES HAVE INFILTRATED AND OCCUPIED A CONSIDERABLE
NUMBER OF HAMLETS SINCE SEPTEMBER WITH THE TACTIC OF FIRST

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USING MORTAR AND SMALL ARMS FIRE TO TIE DOWN FRIENDLY FORCES IN THE NEARBY OUTPOST. ONE VC SQUAD THEN ENGAGES THE OUTPOST WHILE THE BALANCE OF THE UNIT INFILTRATES AND OCCUPIES THE HAMLET.

2. TO COUNTER THESE TACTICS COL. SINH SAID HE IS ORGANIZING REGIONAL AND POPULAR FORCE (RF/PF) MOBILE UNITS TO BE QUARTERED IN AND OCCUPY HAMLETS AS WELL AS OUTPOSTS. THE TERRITORIAL FORCES, HOWEVER, ARE SERIOUSLY UNDERSTRENGTH. THE 25 RF COMPANIES ARE ABOUT 40 PERCENT UNDERSTRENGTH, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THIS LIMITS THE NUMBER OF MOBILE UNITS AVAILABLE TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN. COL. SINH SAID RECRUITING WAS VERY DIFFICULT AND THAT EACH MONTH THE STRENGTH OF THE RF AND PF DECREASES BECAUSE OF A LACK OF RECRUITS.

3. COL. SINH SAID THE DISPERSION OF ENEMY MAIN FORCES AMONG LOCAL VC UNITS IS INTENDED TO ENABLE THE VC TO OCCUPY AS MANY POPULATED AREAS AS POSSIBLE AFTER A CEASEFIRE AND TO SUBSTANTIATE THE COMMUNIST CLAIM THAT THERE ARE NO NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) UNITS IN THE PROVINCE. SINH SAID THE 18B AND 95A REGIMENTS ARE COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF NVA TROOPS AND THE D-1 AND D-2 ARE ABOUT ONE-THIRD NVA. HE ADDED THAT THE MAIN MISSION OF THE

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PAGE 3 OF 4 PAGES

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ENEMY UNTIL A CEASEFIRE IS TO OCCUPY AND CONTROL AS MANY HAMLETS AS POSSIBLE, BUT NOTED THAT DISTRICT TOWNS COULD ALSO BE TARGETED.

4. COL. SINH SAID RF AND PF MORALE IS NOT UP TO STANDARD. WHEN THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) 21ST DIVISION LEFT CHUONG THIEN FOR THE AN LOC AREA IN APRIL THE TERRITORIAL FORCES LOST CONFIDENCE AND FREQUENTLY ABANDONED OUTPOSTS. THE 21ST DIVISION RETURNED IN AUGUST BUT HEAVY CASUALTIES HAD MADE IT INEFFECTIVE. RF AND PF MORALE IS ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY CEASEFIRE RUMORS, AND SINH HAS TOLD RF AND PF LEADERS THAT THEY MUST MAKE A FINAL PUSH BEFORE A CEASEFIRE TO PREVENT THE COMMUNISTS FROM REALIZING THEIR PLANS TO OCCUPY POPULATION CENTERS.

5. COL. SINH STRESSED THAT FROM THE BITTER EXPERIENCE GAINED AS A RESULT OF COMMUNIST FAILURE TO OBSERVE CEASEFIRE AGREEMENTS IN 1954 AND IN LAOS IN 1962, THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM IS DETERMINED NOT TO BE CAUGHT AGAIN. PLANS ARE PREPARED TO USE THE TERRITORIAL FORCES AS REQUIRED TO PREVENT THE COMMUNISTS FROM EXTENDING CONTROL EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER A CEASEFIRE.

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PAGE 4 OF 4 PAGES

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7. FIELD DISSEM: EMBASSY USMACV 7TH AIR FORCE AT SAIGON;
SENT TO CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT PARIS.

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